



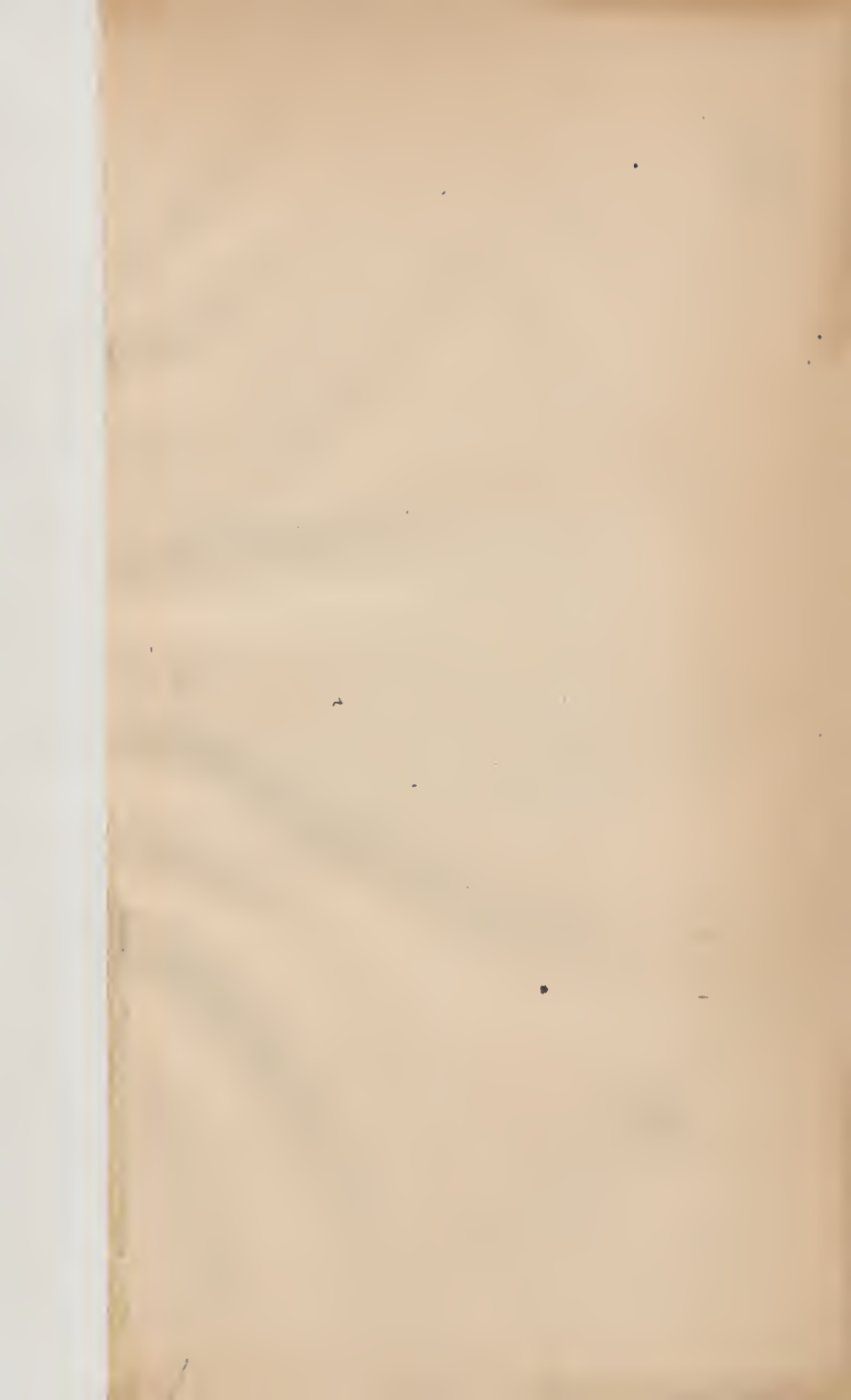
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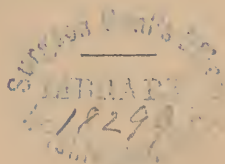


WHAT ACTS
IN
POTENTISED MEDICINES?
AND
WHAT SHALL GUIDE US
IN THE
SELECTION OF THE DOSE?

BY
ADOLPHUS FELLGER, M. D.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
DAVID COWLEY, M. D.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
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I maintain, that there must be an original substance [principle], which is the agent, operating directly and immediately upon the nerves, and which is not of that species of coarse matter, the presence of which can be noticed by the ordinary senses.

A. MESMER.

WHAT ACTS IN POTENTISED MEDICINES? ETC.

If the incontestable law of nature—“*similia similibus curantur*”—afford to the homœopathic physician a sure indication of the remedy he should choose in a given case, so must the equally incontestable law of nature—“the greater power always suspends the less”—be an equally sure guide in regard to the *dose* of medicine which he should administer in a given case.

That the last mentioned law is not used as a guide in this respect, the manifold contradictions and the innumerable disputes concerning the dose, in Homœopathic Literature and Journals, as well as those occurring daily among physicians, fully testify.

That medicines in themselves are more powerful than diseases, Hahnemann has already proved in his *Organon*, in the following paragraphs: 30, 31, 32, 33, 51, 74, 75, 148, 283. It is also clearly shown there, by what rules homœopathic physicians should be guided in order to select the proper dose of medicine—§ 278. But in consequence of the many apparent contradictions concerning the power and operation of the dose (as will be shown) in that work, so much confusion and obscurity have been introduced into the subject, that it is very difficult, indeed, even impossible for many, from what is there said to form a proper idea concerning it; and therefore it is impossible in this respect to find any agreement among homœopathic physicians. Indeed, before this difference of opinion was arranged, the subject began to be more difficult by the introduction of the so-called *high potencies*.

By different homœopathic physicians, the medicines are used from the mother tinctures to the highest potencies; and experience shows that the medicines operate in all their different dilutions, for the whole scale of dilutions have reliable authorities who testify to their operation; and as every physician who administers medicine must take sides in this question, it is not to be wondered at that there are so many contradictions and so much strife which has not as yet been adjusted.

So much for the causes of the difference of opinion among homœopathic physicians in regard to the dose.

The question now is, How may this difference of opinion be avoided? We answer very simply, By *proving*, according to the above-

mentioned law, which potency is the strongest. This, however, is to be understood only relatively, viz. : Not which among the different potencies is the strongest absolutely, but which of the different potencies is the strongest (or most powerful) against the potency—so to speak—of a disease.

But before we proceed to this argument, we must mention an error which has crept in among homœopathic physicians, which, it appears to us, should be noticed now, in order to avoid mistakes in the future. Many physicians use the expression, “stronger dose,” to indicate a higher potency, while others use it to indicate a lower one—seemingly to express their own individual opinions concerning this matter. This expression should not be used in such an indefinite sense. We can only judge of the power of a potency from its action; this action can only be observed after its administration; and hence, as experience teaches,—and as will soon be shown—there can be no scale formed of the power of different doses and of their action. Only the quantitative proportion of medicine contained in the potency should be considered, and, therefore, only a pure mathematical term should be understood by it; so that we shall view the undiluted medicines as an undivided whole, and each and every potency as a part or fraction of the whole, from the first to the highest potency; the higher number always signifying a greater fraction, and therefore a smaller power or potency—as already mentioned—but only in the pure mathematical sense, viewed separately from its operation; this, however, is only to avoid errors and mistakes.

About the time that the profoundly learned Samuel Hahnemann discovered that truth of nature—“*similia similibus*”—on which he based his system of healing, another equally deep and clear-headed thinker—Andrew Mesmer—after long and laborious investigations, discovered a power of nature, until that time hidden, which he comprehended under twenty-six rules, among which the following refer to our present subject :

1st. “There exists among the heavenly bodies, the globe; and in all living beings, an alternating influence.”

2d. “A fluid, which is so universally spread, that it leaves no vacant space; and *which is so fine that it cannot be compared to anything*; and which, from its nature, has the power of taking, communicating, and transplanting all impressions, is the agent in this influence.”

7th. “The properties of inanimate matter and of organised bodies, and the alternating operations of this active substance, because they directly penetrate the nerve substance, set it immediately (not mediately) in motion.”

8th. "In the human body there are found properties which correspond with those of the magnet: there are to be distinguished therein many opposite poles, which may be communicated, altered, destroyed, and strengthened."

9th. "The properties of the animal body, which make it capable of receiving the influence of heavenly bodies, and of reciprocating the operation of substances surrounding it, by their similarity with the magnet, have induced me to call this Animal Magnetism."

As Hahnemann has clearly stated to us why medicines, that they may effect a cure, should be given according to the principle "*similia similibus*," so has Mesmer here given the only correct idea of *what acts* in the Hahnemannian and highly potentised medicines. An explanation for which we may seek fruitlessly among all the known sciences; which Hahnemann only superficially hinted at, and endeavored to account for by common and known physiological definitions. Mesmer says, in Rule I, "There exists among the heavenly bodies, in the globe, (to which belong all things that are found on it,—certainly all kinds of medicines,—) and in all living beings, an alternating influence." By means of this are explained the influence of medicines on the body, and its reaction against it.

In Rule II—"A fluid which is so universally diffused that it leaves no vacant space; and *which is so fine that it cannot be compared with anything*; and which, from its nature, has the power of taking, communicating, and transplanting all impressions, is the agent in this influence."

Hence this influence operating on our bodies is of so fine a property, that it cannot be compared with anything; or else,

Only an influence so fine as to be compared with nothing, is the agent which operates on all living bodies.

In Rule VII—"The properties of inanimate matter, and of organised bodies,—the alternating operations of this active substance,—because they directly penetrate the nerve-system, set it immediately in motion;" hence this fine out-streaming fluidity of different bodies [medicaments] penetrates immediately into the substance of the nerves.

In Rule VIII—"In the human body there are found properties which correspond with those of the magnet." Hence Mesmer found, that the fine fluid belonging to the human body, which was under the alternating influence of heavenly and earthly bodies, is similar to that of the magnet.

In Rule IX—"The properties of the animal body, which make it capable of receiving the influence of the heavenly bodies, and of reci-

procating the operation of substances surrounding it, by their similarity with the magnet, have induced me to call this Animal Magnetism." Because the fine fluid of the human body and that of the magnet exhibit similarities, and also differences, Mesmer called this fine fluid of the human body, in order to distinguish it from that of the magnet, *Animal Magnetism*.

As different operations of this fine fluid proceed out of different bodies (all medicines), so the difference of the bodies themselves appears to be the cause of the different operation of each; and would we, as Mesmer, compare this universal fluid of all bodies with that of the magnet, so must we also, according to the modification of their action occasioned by the difference of the substance itself, say Arsenic Magnetism, Belladonna Magnetism, Nux-vomica Magnetism, Lachesis Magnetism, Cannabaris Magnetism, &c.

I believe that here I have given the most reasonable conception possible, of the mode of operation of medicines (also potentised).

Had Hahnemann recognised such a law of nature as is set forth in Mesmer's Rules 1st and 2d, and explained by means of it the mode of operation of his potencies, so had Homœopathy escaped much malice which was directed not against the law "*similia similibus*," but against the potencies. Hahnemann contented himself with having found out the law "*similia similibus*" and—what he ought not to have done—he placed under this law much which did not belong to it. So he speaks of homœopathically prepared medicines, homœopathic medicines, homœopathic diet, &c. There is no homœopathically prepared medicine, unless we might consider Silicea prepared in a stone mortar, Iron in an iron mortar, to be so. We ought only to say, medicines magnetised or potentised, or prepared for use according to the homœopathic law. Just as wrong is the expression Homœopathic medicines. The medicine only becomes homœopathic, as it is used according to the law "*similia similibus*." Indeed, it may be the case, that a so-called homœopathic physician, among all the medicines which he has given to his patients in the course of a day, has not administered a single homœopathic one; while in the same time an allopathic physician has prescribed homœopathic medicines to all his patients. We should really say Hahnemannian medicines; because Hahnemann first used this kind of medicine. Hence there can be no homœopathic diet—only a diet for patients treated homœopathically.

The mode of preparing medicines according to Hahnemann's rules, could not be deduced from the law "*similia similibus*;" for if only potentised medicines were homœopathic, then there had never been a

homœopathic cure performed before the time of Hahnemann, as he was the first to teach the potentising of medicines; while Hahnemann says himself, in his "*Materia Medica Pura*," that there have been, and still are, remarkable cures made by allopathic physicians, and that this could only be done by the use of a medicine acting according to the homœopathic law; consequently homœopathic cures can be performed without potentised Hahnemannian medicines.

We might say that Hahnemannian potencies are homœopathic medicines, if they would act only when chosen homœopathically (a consummation devoutly to be wished). This, however, is likewise not the case, for Hahnemann says in the *Organon*, that it is a proof that the medicine is not homœopathically chosen, if it causes new symptoms different from the existing disease; therefore a potentised medicine may act, even when it is not chosen homœopathically; hence, *only after the use of a medicine, can it be positively affirmed whether it is homœopathic or not*. One thing is certain, that the principle according to which the medicine ought to be used, and the mode of preparation, are two entirely different things, which should not be confounded with each other.

On the other hand, Mesmer knew the alternately operating power in nature, which in subtilty cannot be compared with anything, and he diligently sought to acquire power over it, so that he might use it for the good of mankind, by curing diseases. He succeeded in making this power active in the human organism, and in using it according to certain rules in the cure of certain diseases.

But Mesmer also, satisfied himself with having discovered this power—which he called Animal Magnetism—and wished to use it as a universal remedy, instead of going further, and seeking to find out and get the control of that power in all bodies, which he himself asserted lay hidden in them, and so to discover an innumerable number of remedies, which, by their alternating operation upon the human organism, must have acted curatively.

Hahnemann did not seek in medicines this subtle power, which cannot be compared with anything, although he found it, and used it for the benefit of mankind.

From all that is known to me on this subject, I may safely say, that we do not owe the potentising of medicines to the investigations of Hahnemann, but only to his acute gift of observation, and to the principle, That no more aggravation of a disease should be allowed than is absolutely necessary for cure. Hahnemann commenced to dilute, in the commonest way, those medicines which he thought acted too powerfully. He soon, however, found that by the dilution of a medicine, he developed

a power in it which rose out of, and above, the material substance; which latter, like unnecessary ballast, might be thrown aside as useless. Hahnemann correctly ascribed the development of this active power to the trituration and shaking necessary for dilution.

Hahnemann discovered, in a lucky way, the proper mode by which to set in motion and develop in medicinal bodies, that "subtle power which cannot be compared with anything," and perfected and finished what Mesmer had left incomplete. But he did not, as Mesmer, find out Animal Magnetism by investigations, but more accidentally, by observation.

The development of the magnetic power of the Hahnemannian medicines, as their mode of preparation shows, occurs in an analogous manner to the development of the magnetic power of iron.

From the preceding observations, it is evident that we owe our thanks for the law "*similia similibus*," and the argument for the action of potentised medicines, to those two profound investigators of the secrets of nature, Hahnemann and Mesmer. Yes! had the physicians of earlier times—as these two great men—studied *nature* and the *nature* of medicine, instead of the *art of medicine*, mankind would have been spared innumerable sufferings. For truly, art [human] cannot help, only nature [divine] can.

Hence we may distinguish homœopathic from allopathic physicians, and call the former natural, the latter, unnatural physicians.

Before we proceed to the task of showing how the difference of opinion among physicians may be removed, it shall be shown how the apparent contradictions of Hahnemann, in his *Organon*, have brought among his followers errors and obscurity concerning the power and action of his potencies. For instance, in § 255, Hahnemann says:

"But if the remedy has been well selected, and the amendment, notwithstanding, delays its appearance, it can only be attributed either to some irregularity on the part of the patient, or to the lengthened duration of the homœopathic aggravation excited by the medicinal substance; and we ought thence to conclude that the dose was not minute enough."

Does the "minute dose" here refer to the dose itself, or to a higher or lower dilution?

Again, in § 269, he says: "The homœopathic healing art develops for its purposes the immaterial [*dynamic*] virtues of medicinal substances, and to a degree previously unheard of, by means of a peculiar and hitherto untried process. By this process it is that they become penetrating, operative, and remedial; even those that, in a natural or crude state, betrayed not the least medicinal power upon the human system."

From this we must conclude, that diluted medicines are the more powerful; that is, the more active; so much so, indeed, that some unpotentised medicines do not operate at all, hence are the weakest.

Again, he says, in the observation to § 270: "I dissolved a grain of Natron in half an ounce of a mixture of water and a little alcohol, poured the solution into a vial, which was thereby filled two-thirds, and shook it uninterruptedly for half an hour. By this agitation, the fluid attained an energy equal to that of the thirtieth dilution."

One grain of Natron, diluted in 240 grains of water and alcohol—only a little more than the first dilution—was taken, and by half an hour's shaking, brought to the same strength as the 30th potency; also here Hahnemann appears to designate the 30th potency as the stronger.

Again, in § 676: "Even a homœopathic medicine is, on this account, always injurious, when given in too large a dose, and hurtful to the patient in proportion to the extent of the quantity administered. But the increase of the dose itself is also prejudicial, in the same degree as the remedy is more homœopathic; and a strong dose of such a medicine would do more harm, than the dose of an allopathic medicinal substance—which bears no analogy whatever to the disease—of equal strength; for, in that case, the homœopathic aggravation, that is to say, the artificial malady—which is very analogous to the natural one—excited by the remedy in the most suffering parts of the organism, is carried to a height that is injurious; whereas, if it had been confined within proper limits, it would have effected a gentle, prompt, and certain cure. It is true, the patient no longer suffers from the primitive malady,—which has been homœopathically destroyed,—but he suffers so much more from the medicinal one,—which was much too powerful,—and from unnecessary debility."

Here Hahnemann appears by the "larger dose" to understand the dose by itself, without relation to the potency; but then he again attributes a greater power to the higher potencies, by saying that they do more harm than the lower ones.

Again, in § 280: "This incontrovertible axiom, founded upon experience, will serve as a rule by which the doses of all homœopathic medicines, without exception, are to be attenuated to such a degree that, after being introduced into the body, they shall merely produce an almost insensible aggravation of the disease. It is of little import, whether the attenuation goes so far as to appear almost impossible to ordinary physicians, whose minds feed on no other ideas than those that are gross and material. All their arguments and vain assertions will be of little avail, when opposed to the dictates of unerring experience."

Exactly in contradiction with the foregoing paragraph, this shows that the more the medicine is reduced or potentised, the less noticeable is the homœopathic aggravation; hence more highly potentised medicines are less powerfully active than lower ones.

Again, in § 283: "To proceed, therefore, in a manner conformable to nature, the true physician will only administer a homœopathic remedy in the precise dose necessary to exceed and destroy the disease to which it is opposed; so that, if by one of those errors pardonable to human frailty, he had made choice of a remedy that was inappropriate, the injury that might result from it would be so slight, that the development of the vital force, and the administration of the smallest dose of another remedy more homœopathic, would suffice to repair it."

This paragraph is in exact contradiction to § 276. In that paragraph he gives the warning, to be careful in using higher potencies, because they may cause more harm than lower ones; and in this, he gives the advice to use the higher potencies, because they do less harm than the lower.

Again, in § 284: "The effects of a dose are by no means diminished, in the same proportion as the quantity of the medicinal substance is attenuated in the homœopathic practice. Eight drops of a tincture, taken at once, do not produce upon the human body four times the effect of a dose of two drops; they merely produce one that is nearly double. In the same manner, the single drop of a mixture, composed of one drop of a tincture and ten of a liquid void of all medicinal properties, does not produce ten times the effect that a drop ten times more attenuated would produce, but merely an effect that is scarcely double. The progression continues according to this law; so that a single drop of a dilution, attenuated in the highest degree, ought, and does in fact, produce a very considerable effect.

"Suppose, for example, that one drop of a mixture containing the tenth of a grain of any medicinal substance, produces an effect $= a$; a drop of another mixture, containing merely a hundredth part of a grain of this same substance, will only produce an effect $= \frac{a}{2}$; if it contains a ten-thousandth part of a grain of medicine, the effect will be $\frac{a}{4}$; if a millionth, it will be $= \frac{a}{8}$; and so on progressively, to an equal volume of the doses; the effects of the remedy on the body will merely be diminished about one-half, each time that the quantity is reduced nine-tenths of what it was before. I have often seen a drop of the tincture of Nux Vomica at the decillionth degree of dilution, produce exactly half the effect of another at the quintillionth degree, when I administered both one and the other to the same individual, and under the same circumstances."

Here Hahnemann endeavors to prove mathematically, that the higher potencies are the weaker. For ourselves, we must strongly protest against any attempt at such mathematical proof; neither can we understand

how Hahnemann made the experiment, in order to determine quite accurately that the decillionth solution of *Nux Vomica*, acted just half as much as the quintillionth of the same tincture.

Again, in the observation to § 287, he says: "The higher the dilutions of a medicine are carried, in the process of developing its power by means of twice shaking, the more rapidly and with the more penetrating influence does it appear to affect medicinally the vital power, and produce changes in the economy, with an energy but little diminished, even if the process of dilution be carried to a great extent; for instance, instead of the ordinary dilution X,—which is mostly sufficient,—it be carried up to XX, L, C, and even higher dilutions."

The 30th potency is that mostly suitable. Higher dilutions operate more quickly, and more deeply, but their operation appears to last a shorter time.

These paragraphs, extracted from Hahnemann's *Organon*, were by no means a good point of support on which physicians should rely in the administration of medicines; yet later it shall be shown, that all these apparent contradictions may be reconciled, and everything still retained as Hahnemann there gives it.

That the operative power of the Hahnemannian potencies is identical with the subtle magnetic power discovered by Mesmer—a power which brings all bodies in heaven and earth into an alternating connection—may be seen in the following paragraphs from Hahnemann's *Organon*:

§ 269. "The homœopathic healing art develops for its purposes the immaterial [*dynamic*] virtues of medicinal substances, and to a degree previously unheard of, by means of a peculiar and hitherto untried process. By this process it is that they become penetrating, operative, and remedial; even those that, in a natural or crude state, betrayed not the least medicinal power upon the human system."

§ 289. "Every part of the body that is sensible to the touch, is equally susceptible of receiving the impression of medicines, and of conveying it to all the other parts."

According to this, potentised medicines act exactly in the same way upon our bodies, as the magnet and Animal Magnetism.

§ 291. "Even those organs which have lost the sense that was peculiar to them—such, for example, as the tongue and palate deprived of taste, the nose of smell, &c.—communicate to all the other parts of the body the effects of the medicines acting immediately on themselves, in as perfect a manner as if they were in possession of their own peculiar faculties."

§ 292. "Although the surface of the body is covered with skin and epidermis, it is not less accessible to the action of medicines, especially

such as are liquid. However, the most sensitive parts of this covering, are those which have the greatest tendency to receive it."

Can there be a greater similarity between the action of the magnet and Animal Magnetism, and potentised medicines?

It is incomprehensible to us how Hahnemann, after what has just been proved, could hold the opinion, that Mesmer's Animal Magnetism differed entirely in its nature from all other medicines, as stated in § 293.

Just as incomprehensible is it, that he should not have regarded it—Animal Magnetism—as the most important of all curative means, as he was fully cognizant of its powerful action, as may be seen in the Organon, paragraphs 293, 294, and notes to them; and that he should class it with the other medicines, as a common remedy, and therefore make what ought to be received as superior occupy only a subordinate place.

It was thought necessary to treat of all the foregoing subjects, before it could be shown how the views of homœopathic physicians, in regard to the size of the dose of medicines, can be harmonized.

In order to prescribe the proper dose, two things ought to be known, viz :

1. The power of the potency of the medicine; and
2. The power of the disease opposed to it.

But, all that can as yet be definitely said concerning these two powers, is :

1. That they are agents, "the fineness or subtilty of which cannot be compared with anything ;"
2. That only according to the law "*similia similibus*", the one can act curatively upon the other ;
3. That the alternate relation of the several medicinal potencies, to the potencies of diseases—the plus of the one to the minus of the other, and *vice versa*—has not as yet been brought under, and fixed by, definite laws and rules.

It may have been expected from the propositions at the commencement of this article, that some conclusions more definite than the foregoing would have been arrived at; but we think it may now be clearly seen, that in the present state of our science, this is impossible; and now, the mode in which we think the views of homœopathic physicians, in regard to the size of the doses of medicines, may be harmonized is, *that the experience of each one be regarded as sacred and inviolable, so long as science gives no positive laws to guide us in the matter.* We think all should agree on this point.

In conclusion, we add what can be said in general, based on experience, of the power and action of medicines and potencies :—

1. Undiluted or unpotentised medicines, generally produce too strong an operation, reaction, or undesirable concomitant effects, which are not necessary for the cure, and are often even very injurious. *They also become, by dilution, more convenient for use, and also in some cases more efficient in curing. Hence these should always be used in dilutions.*

2. But there are also undiluted and unpotentised medicines, which appear to be entirely inefficient, or only slightly active, and hence only acquire power by being potentised. *These must also be given in dilutions.*

3. It appears that many undiluted medicines produce such a powerful and lasting influence on the human organism, that it would be difficult to counteract or entirely remove it (see Hahnemann, concerning medicinal diseases). *Consequently, these must also be given potentised.*

4. On the other hand, other undiluted medicines appear to produce no bad consequences on the organism, and their operation soon ceases. *Here, without fear of any evil consequences, larger doses may be given.*

5. It appears also, that many *lower and higher potencies* produce such a powerful and lasting influence on the human organism, that it would be difficult to counteract or entirely remove it. *Consequently, these should be more highly potentised, and seldom, or not at all, repeated before the end of their operation.*

6. We quote what Hahnemann says in the Organon, in the following paragraphs:

§ 116. "Certain symptoms are excited by medicines more frequently than others—that is to say, in many patients; some are more rarely produced, and in a small number of persons; while yet others are only so in a few individuals."

§ 117. "To these last belong the so-called idiosyncracies, by which are meant particular constitutions, which, though in other respects healthy, yet have a tendency to be placed in a greater or less morbid state by certain things that do not appear to make any impression on many other persons, or cause any change in them. But this absence of effect upon such or such an individual, is only so in appearance. In short, as the production of every morbid change whatever, pre-supposes the faculty of action in the medicinal substance, and in the patient that of being affected by it, the manifest changes of health that take place in idiosyncracies, cannot be wholly attributed to the particular constitution of the patient. It is necessary to ascribe these, at the same time, to the things that have given them birth, and which embrace the faculty of exercising the same influence over all men, with this exception: that among healthy

persons there are but a small number who have a tendency to allow themselves to be placed in so decided a morbid condition. What proves that these agents really make an impression upon all individuals is, that they cure homœopathically in all patients the same morbid symptoms, as those which they themselves appear to excite only in persons subject to idiosyncracies."

It ought to be noted, that bodies which appear to be indifferent and produce symptoms scarcely noticeable, should not be used as medicines, because the earth supplies us plentifully with active ones.

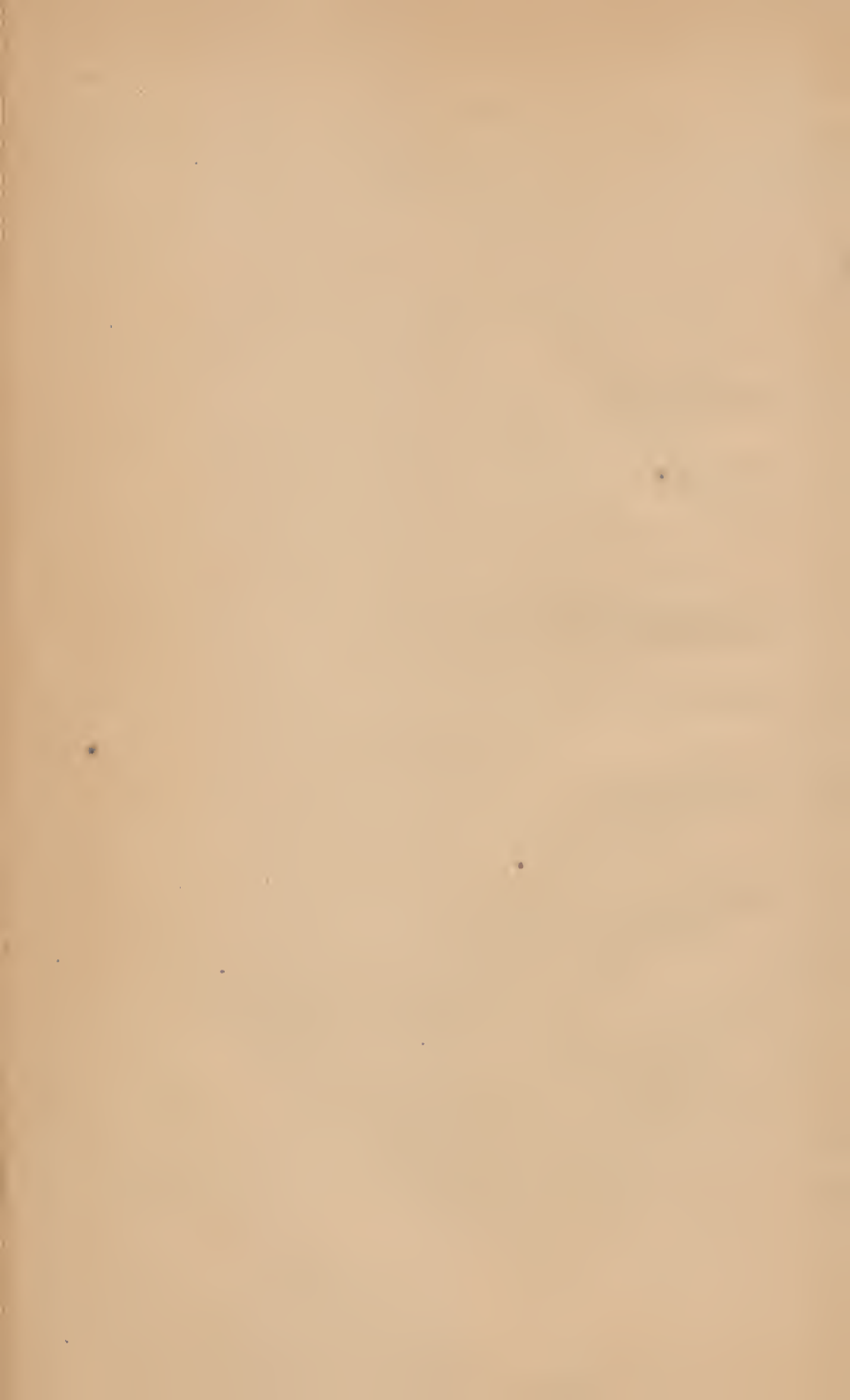
By means of these few general rules concerning the power and action of medicines and potencies, we have fully solved—as above promised—the apparent contradictions of Hahnemann, concerning the power and operation of the different potencies; and we now close this article with Hahnemann's § 278, agreeing perfectly and contentedly with it, until progressing science shall let some light in upon this darkness.

We have only to hope, that the object which was set before us in the beginning of this article, may be attained, viz.:

Unity and harmony among physicians, who entertain different opinions respecting the operation of different potencies.

In Hahnemann's § 278, read: "The question that now suggests itself is, to discover what may be the degree of minuteness of the dose best calculated to render the salutary effects intended to be produced, certain and gentle: that is to say, how far the dose of a homœopathic remedy, in any given case of disease, ought to be reduced, in order to derive from it the best possible cure. It may be readily conceived, that no theoretical conjecture will furnish an answer to this problem, and that it is not by such means we can establish, in respect to each individual medicine, the quantity of the dose that suffices to produce the homœopathic effect, and accomplish a prompt and gentle cure. No reasonings, however ingenious, will avail in this instance. It is by pure experiments only, and precise observations, that this object can be attained. It would be absurd to bring forward as an objection the large doses used in ordinary medicine, which are not applied to the suffering parts themselves, but merely to those not attacked by the disease. This would be no argument against the minuteness of the doses which pure experiments have proved to be necessary in homœopathic treatment."





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